

# JOHN BIRCH UNIT STUDY SUGGESTED

## Senators Eye Semi-Secret, Superconservative Society

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(Washington Bureau of The Sun)

Washington, March 30 — Individual senators of both parties today suggested a congressional investigation of the semi-secret, superconservative John Birch Society.

In the House, a Wisconsin Democrat disclosed that the chairman of the Un-American Activities Committee had turned down his request for such a study.

A California Republican said he himself was a member of the society, claiming "The big 93 per cent of its program is in patriotism and anti-communism."

### Right-Wing Movement

"The John Birch Society is a distant right-wing movement claiming 'cells' in many states. Its leader has pinned 'Communist,' 'pro-Communist' or 'traitor' labels on such Americans as former Presidents Eisenhower, Truman and Roosevelt, Chief Justice Earl Warren, Ex. Milton S. Eisenhower, Allen W. Dulles, director of the Central Intelligence Agency, and the late John Foster Dulles.

Some senators who objected to its activities have been attacked and reacted with speeches on the floor of the Senate. Among them are the conservative Senator Young of North Dakota and the liberal Senator Kuchel of California, both Republicans.

Senator Dodd (D., Conn.), vice chairman of the Internal Security subcommittee, started the Senate discussion of the society today.

He concentrated on Robert Welch, a retired Massachusetts candy manufacturer who founded the society in 1958 and wrote a tract called "The Politician," in which he made many of his accusations of important Americans.

Dodd, who is a vocal anti-Communist himself, said such charges "make it easier for the Communists and ultraliberals to equate opposition to communism with political lunacy."

He said Welch's extreme views are not shared by the great majority of Americans who joined the society because of their genuine concern over communism.

### "Cannot Be Dismissed"

"But these views cannot be dismissed out of hand as the individual views of one man. Welch happens to be head of an organization—and he has never repudiated the views in question," Dodd said.

He also criticized the society's attacks on Kuchel and Young, whom he called "staunch anti-Communists."

Kuchel took the floor next to lash out at the society and its founder's writings on former President Eisenhower and Justice Warren.

"Good God!" he shouted.

"Should the American people and the American Government let that kind of spleen be poured on one who gives his whole life to the cause of freedom?"

He declared that the Government Operations Committee should call Welch, and make him testify on the basis for his charges. Then, because "he is unable to document them," he should apologize to Mr. Eisenhower, Warren and the public, Kuchel said.

Senator Young stood briefly to endorse the sentiments of Dodd and Kuchel. Three weeks ago, he made a long statement against the society.

At that time, the North Dakotan said Welch's accusations went "far beyond anything the late Senator Joe McCarthy ever dreamed of."

Later, reporters asked Dodd if he agreed with Kuchel that an investigation was in order, and whether he might urge "such a probe by the Internal Security subcommittee."

He said that he personally would do so, but that he had no power to make such a decision himself.

The Internal Security panel has been answering mailed complaints about the society with a form letter which says it "seems to be from our records, a patriotic organization."

Dodd said this characterization was written by a committee staff member before many of the facts about the organization had been made public.

Both the Internal Security unit and the House Un-American Activities Committee have concentrated their investigative work against left-wing and Communist-front groups, rather than against organizations at the other end of the political spectrum.

### "No Material Information"

Representative Reuss (D., Wis.) stated today that his request for a probe by the Un-American Activities panel had been rejected by Representative Walter (D., Pa.), chairman.

He released a letter in which Walter said, "We have received no material information which indicates that an investigation should, or could, be made by us under existing statute defining the authority of the committee."

The specific complaint alleges wrongs against individuals—whose

recourse would be in civil courts. Walter, a Representative from California, disclosed that the Birch Society membership fended the group and an investigation into the society's record.

"When an investigation begins to hurt it gets messy," Hiestand said. "The Welch's charges against innocent Americans have begun before he founded the society."

He said he believed congressmen also were being misled by the society's statements about it.

After Reuss's speech, a probe was turned down. Reuss said he would matter up with other men, including Speaker (D., Texas).

"Should know about it."

He said he had no curbs the society's speech, but that its activities that Congress public don't know about.

Many of the other legislators have been recently for letters. Reuss said their writers. Reuss said letters have made sense as the impact of Warren.

A staff member of the American Activities Committee said late today that he asked an outside lawyer the laws to be certain right in ruling the society's ties outside the panel's jurisdiction.

Killed By Testimony John Birch, for whom the controversial society was named.

A Georgia fundamentalist missionary who became a spy agent in China and killed by the Chinese Communists.

The society's total membership is said to be somewhat over 100,000, and a life membership cost \$1,000. Its members are closely guarded.

So conservative a political Senator, Goldwater said yesterday that he disagreed with many of the ideas of the society.

But, Goldwater said, he was pressed with the idea of a probe. "They are the kind of people we need in politics," he said.

Goldwater said he was a member